



**San Diego County**  
**Leon Williams Human Relations Commissioner**

Friday August 21, 2020

San Diego County  
Leon Williams Human Relations Commission  
1600 Pacific Hwy.  
San Diego, CA 92101

**RE: AGENDA ITEM: ADDING TEN ADDITIONAL MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS TO  
THE LEON WILLIAMS HUMAN RELATIONS COMMISSION & DETERMINING  
WHAT REPRESENTATION IS MISSING ON THE CURRENT HRC**

Dear Human Relations Commission Members,

The Leon Williams Human Relations Commission is an important piece to preserving human rights, human dignity and fairness to all San Diegans. I am certain this commission will reach its full potential in exhibiting that kind of leadership in our county. I also believe one of the keys to reaching that true success as a county is to ensure that everyone is at the table. I believe that from the beginning this commission was not organized with the thought of everyone's participation and the seven original organizations brought forth in the original commission board resolution aren't the full scope of representation across our county. The NAACP of San Diego released a public statement when this commission's original board letter came forth to the Board of Supervisors stating the following: "Such a commission is needed now more than ever. Mr. Williams once said that everybody wants to do as much as they can for everybody—that won't occur in this new commission without dedicated staff and resources. Beyond the issue of resources, the effectiveness of the commission will be determined by the members appointed to it and how well they represent County residents as a whole. The lack of inclusion of Asian Pacific Islanders in today's proposal calls into question whether this commission will truly be

representative”. This statement was released the day before the commission's vote by current San Diego Branch President of the NAACP Ms. Francine Maxwell.

In the interest of the people across our county that I've spoken with from different communities, cultures and backgrounds I am requesting we docket an agenda item for our next Human Relations Commission meeting scheduled for August 25, 2020 to discuss ten additional organizational seats being added to our commission. I would ask for no discussion in this agenda item regarding what organizations should be on the commission but rather a discussion regarding what communities are missing at the table currently and recommending the board of supervisors amend the original board letter and resolution by adding ten additional organizational members with each supervisor picking two organizations of their choice to serve on the commission. My recommendation is that the original resolution is amended to add these ten organizations under the same terms of the original seven organizations enlisted as commission members. This will ensure that these organizations the board of supervisors selects are not removed based upon a supervisorial term but rather as the original board resolution states “commissioners 3-8 shall serve at the pleasure of the person or organization so designated. The original seven institutions chosen under this term rule are Jewish Family Services designee, The San Diego LGBT Community Center designee, International Rescue Committee designee, San Diego Rapid Response Network designee, Southern California Tribal Chairmen’s Association designee and The San Diego Chapter of the Black Political Association of California. I am arguing that the new organizations the board of supervisors selects should be under the same term as the original organizations because organizations shouldn’t have been appointed because the argument then becomes how others were left out. Understanding the circumstances now I am asking that these added ten organizations would be appointed to this commission under the same terms of the original seven organizations I listed above.

San Diego County has over 3.3 million residents from all backgrounds and representing so many different cultures. It is important that the commission and our county supervisors don’t focus just on how many seats are already established but rather how many people live in this county and ensuring those who do this work every day are at the table to represent those interests. This county’s human relations commission is missing several in our community such as Latino representation, representation from the foster care community, representation from other important longstanding human and civil rights institutions in our community, as well as representation to address the formerly incarcerated and so many more. We need to discuss these missing parts of our commission and ultimately recommend the board of supervisors amend the

original resolution to add ten additional organizations that are rooted in our community so we can get to work with a broader scope rather than a narrow view. Dr. Martin Luther King once said “Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter”. Cesar Chavez once noted “History will judge societies and governments — and their institutions — not by how big they are or how well they serve the rich and the powerful, but by how effectively they respond to the needs of the poor and the helpless.” I am calling on us to do what is right ensuring every perspective we should have at our table is representative of all of what our county and country can be.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Shane Harris', with a stylized, cursive script.

**Shane Harris**

**San Diego County Leon Williams Human Relations Commissioner**